

POTOMAC AND RAPPAHANNOCK
TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION (PRTC)

OFFICIAL COMMISSION MEETING

MINUTES

DATE: March 4, 2010
TIME: 7:00 p.m.
LOCATION: PRTC Transit Center
14700 Potomac Mills Road, 2nd Floor
Woodbridge, VA 22192-6811

1. CALL TO ORDER

In Chairman's May absence, Vice Chairman Way called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. with a quorum present.

2. ROLL CALL

MEMBERS PRESENT

*Maureen Caddigan	Prince William County
*Wally Covington	Prince William County (arrived at 7:30 p.m.)
*Corey Hill	Department of Rail & Public Transportation
*John Jenkins	Prince William County
*Jerry Logan, Secretary	Spotsylvania County
*Paul Milde, Treasurer	Stafford County
*Frank Principi	Prince William County (arrived at 7:10 p.m.)
*Jonathan Way, Vice Chairman	City of Manassas

ALTERNATES PRESENT

*Lorraine Lasch	Prince William County
*Benjamin Pitts	Spotsylvania County
*Brian Potvin	Prince William County

STAFF AND GENERAL PUBLIC

Gina Altis	PRTC Executive Assistant
Monica Backmon	PWC Department of Transportation
Diane Bergeron	Budget Manager, City of Manassas
Art Clark	FIRST TRANSIT Safety & Training Manager
Doris Chism	PRTC Dir., Customer Service & Dispatch

Tim Crobons
Rob Dickerson
Joyce Embrey
Althea Evans
Sandy Ferris
Anthony Foster
Holly Frisch
Shanta Garth
Al Harf
Steve Hastalis
Robb Howell
Amy Inman
Uriah Kiser
Bob Leibbrandt
Eric Marx
Betsy Massie
Jennifer Mouchantaf
Ginger Murphy
Paul Pitchke
Raymond Spicer
Dave Tyeryar
Dale Zehner

Connectics Transportation Group
PRTC Legal Counsel
PRTC Dir., Finance & Administration
PRTC Dir., Marketing & Communications
Citizen
PRTC Transportation Project Manager
Citizen
FIRST TRANSIT AGM-Accounting & Admin.
PRTC Executive Director
Citizen
FIRST TRANSIT General Manager
Department of Rail & Public Transportation
News and Messenger
Budget & Analysis, Prince William County
PRTC Dir., Planning & Operations
PRTC Dir., Grants & Project Management
VRE Deputy Chief Executive Officer
PRTC Transit Operations Planner
FIRST TRANSIT AGM-Operations
Manassas Family Services
Dir., Budget & Analysis, Prince William County
VRE Chief Executive Officer

MEMBERS ABSENT

Frank Jones, Immediate Past Chairman	City of Manassas Park
Matthew Kelly	City of Fredericksburg
Scott Lingamfelter	Virginia House of Delegates
Michael May, Chairman	Prince William County
Jackson Miller	Virginia House of Delegates
Martin Nohe	Prince William County
Toddy Puller	Virginia Senate
Gary Skinner	Spotsylvania County
Susan Stimpson	Stafford County

ALTERNATES ABSENT

Ateeb Ahmad	Prince William County
David Awbrey	Department of Rail & Public Transportation
Hilda Barg	Prince William County
Jean Benson	City of Fredericksburg
Hap Connors	Spotsylvania County
Harry Crisp	Stafford County
Mark Dudenhefer	Stafford County
Brad Ellis	City of Fredericksburg
Darrel Feasel	Department of Rail & Public Transportation
Peter LaMarca	City of Fredericksburg
Suhas Naddoni	City of Manassas Park

City of Manassas
Prince William County
Prince William County
Prince William County
City of Manassas Park

3.	INVOCATION	Led by Commissioner Milde.
4.	PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE	Led by Vice Chairman Way.
5.	CITIZENS' TIME	No citizens came forward.
6.	PRESENTATIONS	

Mr. Howell noted that the Operator-of-the-Month for January and February 2010 will be recognized at the Commission's April meeting.

Mr. Howell reported thirteen commendations (directed to 12 different operators) were received during the month of February. He went on to report the accident frequency rate for the month of February is 1.59 per 100,000 miles, and the year-to-date is 1.32. Mr. Howell attributed a "spike" in complaints during the month of February to the recent bus operator "run picks" and severe weather.

Moving to another subject, Mr. Howell reported that for the past several weeks, First Transit has been in labor negotiations on a prospective new agreement with the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), the union representing its bus operators at PRTC. The bus operators' contract expired at midnight on March 2nd, but both parties agreed to a 30-day extension to the contract with negotiations resuming Monday morning.

Mr. Howell reported that the “customer satisfaction survey” (conducted three times per year) results indicate significant improvements on the OmniLink bus service and ratings remain steady on the OmniRide bus service.

Commissioner Principi arrived at 7:10 p.m. during First Transit General Manager Robb Howell's report and was present for all the votes.

7. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

RES 10-03-01 Minutes of February 4, 2010
[PRTC\Minutes]

Commissioner Caddigan moved, with a second by Commissioner Jenkins, to approve the Minutes, as presented. There was no discussion on the motion. (CADDIGAN\JENKINS, UNANIMOUS)

8. AGENDA APPROVAL

RES 10-03-02 Agenda of March 4, 2010.
[PRTC\Agenda]

Commissioner Principi moved, with a second by Commissioner Caddigan, to approve the Agenda, as amended. There was no discussion on the motion. (PRINCIPI\CADDIGAN, UNANIMOUS)

9. CONSENT AGENDA APPROVAL

RES 10-03-03 Consent Agenda of March 4, 2010.
[PRTC\Consent Agenda]

Commissioner Jenkins moved, with a second by Commissioner Milde, to approve the Consent Agenda, as presented. (JENKINS\MILDE, UNANIMOUS)

RES 10-03-04 A. Treasurer's Report.
[PRTC\Finance]

Accepted the Treasurer's Report for Period Ending December 31, 2009, as presented. (JENKINS\MILDE, UNANIMOUS)

RES 10-03-05 B. Budget and Appropriation of \$220,880 of Stafford County's
[Stafford] 2% Motor Fuels Tax Funds for Transportation Expenditures
 for the Fourth Quarter of FY 2009.

Authorized the use of \$220,880 for the fourth quarter (FY 2009) of 2% motor fuels tax funding in Stafford County's account for transportation expenditures. (JENKINS\MILDE, UNANIMOUS)

RES 10-03-06 C. Budget and Appropriation of \$202,302 of Stafford County's
[Stafford] 2% Motor Fuels Tax Funds for Transportation Expenditures
 for the First Quarter of FY 2010.

Authorized the use of \$202,302 for the first quarter (FY 2010) of 2% motor fuels tax funding in Stafford County's account for transportation expenditures. (JENKINS\MILDE, UNANIMOUS)

RES 10-03-07 D. Budget and Appropriation of \$205,293 of Stafford County's
[Stafford] 2% Motor Fuels Tax Funds for Transportation Expenditures
 for the Second Quarter of FY 2010.

Authorized the use of \$205,293 for the second quarter (FY 2010) of 2% motor fuels tax funding in Stafford County's account for transportation expenditures. (JENKINS\MILDE, UNANIMOUS)

RES 10-03-08 E. Budget and Appropriation of \$1,102,440 of the City of
[Fredericksburg] Fredericksburg's 2% Motor Fuels Tax Funds for Various
 Transportation Projects.

Authorized the use of \$1,102,440 of 2% motor fuels tax funding for various transportation projects. (JENKINS\MILDE, UNANIMOUS)

10. VIRGINIA RAILWAY EXPRESS (VRE)

[VRE\Info] A. Operations Board Meeting Agenda and Minutes of
 February 19, 2010, and Revised Minutes of January 15,
 2010. There were no comments.

[VRE\Info] B. Chief Executive Officer's Report (2-10).

Mr. Zehner reported that VRE ridership continues to grow with almost every train carrying standees. Average daily ridership of 17,000 occurred in January and increased to 17,390 in February. He went on to report that VRE's on-time performance averaged 84% system-wide for the month of February (82% and 87% on the Fredericksburg and Manassas lines, respectively). Delays during the month of February were principally the result of mechanical and switch/signal problems and severe weather.

Mr. Zehner went on to report that he and VRE Legal Counsel Steve MacIsaac recently met with Secretary of Transportation Sean Connaughton and DRPT Director Thelma Drake about the Cherry Hill project to Arkendale and other VRE issues. A follow up meeting also occurred with Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) Deputy Railroad Administrator Karen Rae and discussions will resume in a few weeks regarding the contract between FRA and the state. Work is scheduled to commence in July.

Continuing, Mr. Zehner reported that DRPT Director Thelma Drake is scheduled to attend an upcoming meeting with CSXT, DRPT, and VRE regarding the Washington-Richmond corridor. She will travel to the VRE offices via the VRE train service departing from the Fredericksburg VRE Station to Alexandria.

Moving to another subject, Mr. Zehner reported construction of a "second platform" at the Woodbridge VRE Station is nearing completion. Construction of the "kiss and ride" lot will not continue until the weather has improved. VRE staff is working with Commissioner Principi to plan a "grand opening" ceremony to occur in the March-April time frame.

11. CHAIRMAN'S TIME

- [PRTC\TDP] A. Introduction of the Transit Development Plan (TDP) Team and the TDP Stakeholder Group, Followed by a PowerPoint Presentation to Acquaint the Commission and Stakeholder Group with the TDP Scope, Schedule, and Early Deliverables.

Vice Chairman Way introduced the TDP Team (Amy Inman of DRPT and Tim Crobons of Connecticut Transportation Group) and acknowledged the TDP Stakeholder Group (William Armstrong, City of Manassas Park; Diane Bergeron, City of Manassas; Monica Backmon, Rick Canizales, Bob Leibbrandt, and Courtney Tierney, Prince William County; and Ray Spicer, Manassas Family Services).

At this time, Ms. Inman and Mr. Crobons provided a briefing about the "Transit Development Plan." A hard copy of the presentation was furnished. A question and answer session followed.

Vice Chairman Way: Will any interaction take place with COG's Transportation Planning Board (TPB) in the development of the analysis. Mr. Harf explained that the financial resources being employed as parameters for the constrained element of the plan will have a tie of sorts to the resource constraints used by COG for its plans and programs. The TDP is service-oriented, as distinct from most of COG's capital-oriented plans, so the only real commonality will be on the financial constraint side.

Vice Chairman Way: Were lessons learned with regard to the COG "rapid bus transit" study. Mr. Harf replied that the principal lesson learned is that density matters, so PRTC will need to right-size its transit services so they are commensurate with the local area densities. He went on to observe that Prince William County aspires to develop more densely in certain areas and, as that vision is realized, it has companion implications for transit service expansion.

Commissioner Caddigan: Why is the OmniLink bus service per capita less than PRTC's peers? Mr. Harf explained the amount of OmniLink bus service is basically a policy-driven decision about how much transit local government sponsors feel they can afford.

Commissioner Hill: Noted that DRPT has two major aims in mandating TDPs statewide: 1) creating a sound asset management system – there are currently 59 transit systems in the state of Virginia and DRPT is collecting the existing asset information of those systems to verify the timing and costs of replacement when needed; and 2) arraying future needs and associated funding requirements, for expanded services. Taken together the fulfillment of these two aims will enable DRPT to predict transit systems' needs and seek resources as necessary.

Commissioner Principi: What is the percentage of the state's subsidy to PRTC. Commissioner Hill answered the state provides about 14% of PRTC's capital and operating expenses.

Vice Chairman Way: What are the key determinants for deciding when a higher intensity of bus transit per capita is warranted, and will the TDP provide insights about this? Commissioner Hill responded that this is more a matter of local preference, and he went on to say that DRPT's aim is to ensure that transit plans are grounded in reality and a legitimate expression of what the community wants and is willing to pay for.

Mr. Harf observed that the segregation of PRTC's bus services in the TDP planning effort from a separate TDP planned for VRE services poses a complication for PRTC's jurisdictions because local resource constraints apply to the services in the aggregate.

Commissioner Covington: How many of the peer systems have a train component. Mr. Crobons initially replied "none," and then corrected himself by noting that several do have rail-bus mixes.

Commissioner Covington: Questioned whether the peers chosen are analogous to PRTC/VRE, prompting both Mr. Crobons and Mr. Harf to acknowledge the difficulties in finding perfect peers.

Mr. Harf went on to observe that VRE train service and commuter bus service do not compete with one another. This was verified by research conducted with regard to the origin-destination patterns for both commuter bus and VRE riders in the I-66 and I-95 corridors, showing a remarkable degree of complementariness rather than overlap (e.g. people who reside in eastern Prince William County and travel east of 14th Street will generally opt to commute via the VRE while people who travel to destinations west of 14th Street will generally opt to commute by commuter bus). If people were consigned to only one mode, new services would have to be introduced providing direct access to the same locations.

Commissioner Covington arrived at 7:30 p.m. during the TDP presentation and was absent on the vote for Items 7, 8, 9, and 9A-E.

12. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S TIME

[PRTC\Info] A. Executive Director's Report.

On the Federal side, Mr. Harf reported an extension of SAFETEA-LU will ultimately occur once the House and Senate have reconciled their respective "jobs bills." A one-year extension of SAFETEA-LU is anticipated.

With regard to TIGER funding, Mr. Harf highlighted PRTC's good fortune as a recipient of \$10 million for bus and CAD/AVL acquisitions, which is 100% of what PRTC had sought. He contrasted PRTC's successful pursuit with the overall ratio of applications vs. available

funding nationwide. PRTC will proceed expeditiously once the funds are secured because the funds themselves must be spent no later than February 2012.

On the state side, Mr. Harf reported that the state transportation funding issue in all likelihood will not be resolved until a special session occurs. He went on to report that the bill sponsored by Delegate Scott Lingamfelter to override Tax Commissioner Bowen's "motor fuels tax guidelines" exemptions has been legislated (HB 1329) and is awaiting the Governor's signature. He also noted that the "background checking/fingerprinting" bills sponsored by Delegate Jackson Miller (HB 690) and Senator Toddy Puller (HB 28) passed in both the Senate and House and is now awaiting the Governor's signature.

Continuing, Mr. Harf reported that PRTC in conjunction with the Virginia Transit Association (VTA) was successful in nixing the outgoing Administration's plan to divert \$30 million of formula capital funding for discretionary spending. In so doing, the \$30 million will continue to be a part of the transportation trust fund that is distributed on a formula basis to all the transit systems.

With regard to the Proposed FY 2011 fare increase, Mr. Harf reported the public review process is complete, and the Commission is being asked to adopt the increase as proposed (an action item elsewhere on this month's agenda).

Mr. Harf reported staff spent the month of February dealing with severe weather, service disruptions, and operator shortages. PRTC riders were accepting of service disruptions except for the "limited service" provided on Friday, February 12 (the first day back for the federal government). On February 16, a spike in the shortage of bus operators disrupted service delivery, resulting in missed trips. Despite these setbacks, PRTC continues to have near record high bus ridership carrying 13,000 riders per day.

[PRTC\Action] B. Action Items:

RES 10-03-09 1. FY 2011 Fare Increase.
[PRTC\Fare Increase]

Commissioner Milde moved, with a second by Commissioner Covington, to adopt the proposed fare increase. There was no discussion on the motion. (MILDE\COVINGTON, UNANIMOUS)

RES 10-03-10 2. FY 2010 Mid-Year Budget Revision.
[PRTC\Budget]

Commissioner Caddigan moved, with a second by Commissioner Pitts, to approve the revision of PRTC's FY 2010 budget from \$30,313,800 to \$45,173,700. There was no discussion on the motion. (CADDIGAN\PITTS, UNANIMOUS)

RES 10-03-11 3. Landscaping Contract Award.
[PRTC\Landscaping]

Commissioner Caddigan moved, with a second by Commissioner Milde, to authorize the award of a contract to Grass Roots, Inc. and authorized the Executive Director to exercise each of the four one-year options without the need for further Commission action. There was no discussion on the motion. (CADDIGAN\MILDE, UNANIMOUS)

[PRTC\Info] C. Information Items:

1. PRTC Service Performance Reports. There were no comments.
2. PRTC Budget-to-Actual Comparison. There were no comments.
3. Communications:
 - a. Related to Funding. There were no comments.
 - b. Related to Jurisdiction. There were no comments.
 - c. General Interest. There were no comments.
4. Most Recent Customer Satisfaction Survey Results. Mr. Harf reported that customer satisfaction ratings improved on the OmniLink bus service and ratings remain high on the OmniRide bus service despite overcrowding. As a result of traffic congestion and an increasing demand for off route deviations, the low “excellent” rating for the OmniLink on-time performance remains a challenge. This was the subject of a presentation to the PRTC Operations Committee in November 2009 and has been targeted for special analysis as part of the transit development planning exercise currently underway.

13. OTHER BUSINESS/COMMISSIONERS' TIME

Commissioner Caddigan asked the Executive Director to follow up with the gentleman they recently conversed about.

14. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Commission, Vice Chairman Way adjourned the meeting at 8:20 p.m.

NEXT MEETING: Thursday, April 1, 2010, 7:00 p.m.

LOCATION: PRTC Transit Center
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Woodbridge, VA 22192-6811
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